

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 134901
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 IO-14 /052 R

DRAFTED BY AF/P:BARUSSELL:MR
APPROVED BY AF:WBEDMONDSON
-----112006Z 035378 /62

R 102107Z JUN 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS STATE 134901

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL

THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN THE JUNE 9 ISSUE OF THE
WASHINGTON POST:

APPROACHES TO SOUTH AFRICA

VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE WENT TO VIENNA TO MEET SOUTH AFRICAN
PRIME MINISTER JOHN VORSTER SAYING THAT WHAT THE UNITED
STATES FAVORED WAS A CHANGE FROM APARTHEID TO "FULL POLITI-
CAL PARTICIPATION" BY ALL RACES. AFTERWARD, HOWEVER, HE
SAID THAT FULL PARTICIPATION MEANT "ONE MAN, ONE VOTE."
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT TO PRETORIA'S RECORD OF TWISTING WORDS
TO CONCEAL CRUDITIES OF POLICY, THEREIN LIES A DISTINCTION
ON WHICH HOPES FOR AN EASING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CRISIS
MAY WELL REST.

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"FULL PARTICIPATION" MEANS, BROADLY, THAT ALL BLACKS WOULD
PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM WITHIN A UNITARY SOUTH
AFRICAN STATE (NOT JUST WITHIN BLACK HOMELANDS) AND THAT
WHITES WOULD NOT BE FACED WITH AN IMMEDIATE DEMAND TO DELI-
VER THEMSELVES TO DOMINATION BY NON-WHITES. MORAL PRINCIPLE
ARGUES AGAINST SUCH A COMPROMISE; SOUND POLICY ARGUES FOR IT.

"ONE MAN, ONE VOTE," HOWEVER, IS A PHRASE OPEN TO THE INTERPRETATION THAT WASHINGTON SEEKS TO APPLY TO SOUTH AFRICA'S DIFFERING CIRCUMSTANCES ITS OWN FULLY DEMOCRATIC PATTERN. THE MOST IMPASSIONED WHITE ADVOCATES OF CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE NOT REALLY READY TO TAKE SUCH A DRASTIC STEP ALL AT ONCE.

WHAT MR. MONDALE DID BY MOVING FROM ONE PHRASE TO THE NEXT WAS TO HAND THE VORSTER GOVERNMENT A READY-MADE CLUB WITH WHICH TO BEAT BACK THE OPPOSITION PARTIES' CLAIM THAT, IF SOUTH AFRICA WERE TO MOVE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE HALFWAY HOUSE CALLED "POWER SHARING," THEN THE UNITED STATES WOULD RESPOND APPROPRIATELY. EVEN WITHIN THE RULING NATIONALIST PARTY, THERE ARE SOME SLIGHT HINTS OF WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER A FEDERAL OR CONFEDERAL SCHEME IN WHICH THE SPECIAL BRUTALITIES OF APARTHEID WOULD BE REDUCED. IN THESE HINTS LIE WHAT THIN PROSPECTS THERE ARE TO AVOID CALAMITY.

THE HYPOCRISY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POSITION IS EVIDENT: THE GOVERNMENT ABHORS THE THOUGHT OF BLACK DOMINATION EVEN WHILE IT PRACTICES AN APPALLING BRAND OF WHITE DOMINATION. STILL, THE UNITED STATES CANNOT AFFORD TO DENY SOME PROSPECT OF RECOGNITION AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO THOSE WHITES WHO ARE PERCEPTIVE AND BRAVE ENOUGH TO CONTEMPLATE CHANGE. IT IS ALL VERY WELL TO INSIST THAT OVER THE LONG HAUL THERE CAN BE NO MORAL COMPROMISING WITH A SYSTEM THAT IS ANATHEMA TO AMERICAN VALUES. BUT, AT LEAST TRANSITIONALLY, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE READY TO RECOGNIZE GOOD-FAITH MOVEMENT TOWARD A POLITICAL STRUCTURE THAT FALLS

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SHORT OF THE AMERICAN IDEAL. INDEED, AT THIS POINT IT WOULD PROBABLY BE TACTICALLY UNWISE TO TELL SOUTH AFRICANS IN ADVANCE HOW FAR AND HOW FAST THEY MUST GO. WHAT IS NEEDED MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE TODAY IS THAT PARTICULAR KIND OF POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING ON THE PART OF THIS COUNTRY THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE SOME SPIRIT OF ACCOMMODATION ON THE PART OF SOUTH AFRICA. FOR THE BEGINNINGS OF SOME SORT OF MOVEMENT DOWN THE TORTUOUS ROAD OF ACCOMMODATION IS SOUTH AFRICA'S ONLY CONCEIVABLE ALTERNATIVE TO CATASTROPHE. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition History: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Line Count: 106
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9371e57e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2190552
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN THE JUNE 9 ISSUE OF THE WASHINGTON POST
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, SF
To: CAPE TOWN JOHANNESBURG MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9371e57e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009